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JustWorks Recognizes Achievements of Application Support Centers

On February 9, the Department of Justice (DOJ) recognized the Immigration Services Division's (HQISD) Application Support Center (ASC) Team's accomplishments through its JustWorks Program.

The JustWorks Program identifies, celebrates, and publicizes the best new administrative and operational initiatives within DOJ. JustWorks rewards employee teams whose innovative approaches and problem solving solutions demonstrate strong commitment to continuous improvement in the way DOJ operates. Recognition of 1998's award recipients was made by Deputy Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., the ceremony's keynote speaker.

The ASC Team (also known as the Fingerprint Team), led by former Office of Naturalizations Operations Executive Director, Bob Bratt, established ASCs to provide accessibility to customers and incorporate new technology while ensuring integrity, efficiency, and oversight in the fingerprint process.

The new ASC system of more than 200 sites and mobile routes has eliminated the need for oversight maintenance of the 3,700 sites that used to perform fingerprinting services under

old procedures. The INS' goal for the ASCs is to fully automate the fingerprint process resulting in: a substantial decrease in fingerprint rejection rates by the FBI; trimming the time it takes to submit data to the FBI in half; and freeing up local offices to concentrate on adjudication duties.

Corrections to A Guide to Naturalization

In an article announcing the publication of A Guide to Naturalization, the January NatzNews stated that, during the next six months, the INS will be revising the Guide as necessary, based on changes to naturalization policies and procedures and feedback from users and immigrant advocacy groups.

Based on feedback already received on issues such as registration for selective service and physical presence requirements, HQISD issued corrections to the Guide on February 16, 1999 in an Errata sheet. The Errata sheet will be distributed with copies to the Guide and can be obtained from the Forms Center. For your convenience, a copy of this sheet is attached to this edition of Natz News. The Errata sheet and a corrected version of the Guide will be posted on the INS website, where they will be available for download.

Clarifying the “Public Charge” Doctrine

In a letter of February 1, 1999, to the United Farm Workers of America, INS Deputy Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsh confirmed that there is no public charge test for purposes of naturalization. The receipt of public benefits by an applicant is irrelevant to the naturalization adjudication, as long as the benefits were lawfully received.

The Deputy Commissioner hopes that by clarifying this issue, aliens needing public benefits will use them without fear of damaging their eligibility for citizenship.

Fingerprinting Conference

A fingerprinting conference held in Reston, VA during the first week of February established new lines of communication among the Regions, Service Centers, and Headquarters.

The conference identified 16 issues critical to the functioning of the fingerprint process as well as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) necessary to address these issues. For each issue, the group assigned leads and established timelines for responding to issues which include: fingerprinting people with disabilities; handling fingerprints made outside the U.S.; and coordinating expedited prints with the FBI. As progress is made, it will be reported in NatzNews.

Children’s Citizenship Ceremony

The Washington District Office ended its week-long stay in Roanoke, Virginia, with the first children's citizenship ceremony in the Roanoke area.

During the week of September 21, 1998, the Washington District Office opened a temporary office to meet the needs of the Roanoke area’s population. The Examinations Unit dispensed forms, answered inquiries, accepted applications, fingerprinted applicants, and conducted Naturalization and Adjustment of Status interviews. The Investigations Program conducted seminars on fraudulent documents to community-based organizations, businesses, and local law enforcement agencies.

The week concluded with the administration of the children’s oath of allegiance to twenty-five children from Egypt, Guatemala, China, Russia, Korea, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, India, and Bangladesh.

For many adoptive parents, it was the joyful culmination of months, and sometimes years, of completing paperwork and undergoing interviews with adoption agencies, the INS, and foreign governments and officials.

The guest speaker was United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia, Robert Crouch. An area school student sang patriotic songs followed by the pledge of allegiance recited by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The INS opened the Roanoke office for a week again in December.

Quality Assurance Training

Through a combined effort between INS’ Office of Internal Audit (HQOIA) and HQISD, training will be conducted for the new field Quality Assurance (QA) positions at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Camp (FLETC) in Glynco, GA during the week of March 8, 1999.

The QA positions, appropriated in the FY 1998 Appropriations Act, were created to ensure the integrity and QA for the total naturalization process. The individuals in these positions will ensure that policies and procedures are distributed through the network as well as provide feedback to managers on the naturalization process, and make recommendations on process improvements.

The training addresses roles and responsibilities, ethics, sampling techniques, and processes and reviews related to Naturalization Quality Procedures (NQP4). Cencor, a quality assurance contractor performing a number of quality control functions in numerous INS field locations, in alliance with the INS' new QA analysts, will continue to provide feedback and the results of ongoing reviews to local management, HQISD, and HQOIA.

Spokane Office Solves Naturalization Puzzle

On almost a daily basis, immigrants and U.S. citizens ask the INS to solve naturalization puzzles where finding the right pieces may require tracking down information from decades ago. Finding birth certificates of parents, locating 100 year old shipping documents, making Freedom of Information Act requests for files, and tracking down records that were filed half a century before automation are all part of a day's work for many INS staff members. Such was the task recently for the Spokane office.

John Smith*, age 73, received his Certificate of Citizenship Friday, February 12, 1999 at the Spokane, Washington sub-office. Mr. Smith entered the United States in 1928, debarking from the steamship "Reliance" at the Port of New York City. He served honorably in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, and has always thought he was a citizen of the USA.

Unfortunately, he had nothing to prove he had ever entered the country legally or had become a citizen.

Mr. Smith was recently diagnosed to be terminally ill, and requested that the Spokane office attempt to establish his status so he could apply for a passport and take a trip back to his native Germany. Obtaining old files is always difficult, if not impossible, but fortunately, a file reflecting the man's sister was obtained and evidence was found showing that he, as well as his sister, became U.S. citizens in 1935 when both their parents naturalized.

In a special presentation ceremony, a DAO from Spokane commented that after more than 63 years of Mr. Smith actually being a citizen, it was truly a pleasure to see that he now has a certificate reflecting his status.

*Mr. Smith's real name was not used in this article in order to protect his privacy.

Next CBO Meeting

The next INS/community-based organization meeting will be March 23, 1999, at 2:00 p.m. in the Shaughnessy Conference Room on the 6th floor at the main INS building (425 "I" Street, NW, Washington, DC).

Organizations that would like to send representatives to the monthly meetings should fax their request to Patricia Stivala, Immigration Services Division, at 202/514-8853.

2/16/99 Errata Sheet for *A Guide to Naturalization*
(Form M-476; Rev 11/98)

The following information corrects errors in the *Guide* that have been brought to our attention, clarifies certain sections, and provides updates to laws, regulations, and procedures. Please use this sheet together with the *Guide* to make sure you have the most accurate information available. We apologize for any confusion.

On page 18 (Table of Naturalization Requirements by Type of Applicant), in the description of the 5th applicant category (If you performed active duty military service), the text should read: “If you: Performed active duty military service in the U.S. Armed Forces. . .” Only applicants who performed active duty military service in the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible to apply under this provision of the law.

On pages 20-21 (Table of Naturalization Requirements by Type of Applicant), for the Physical Presence requirements for the 4th applicant category (If you are employed by an American institution of research, an American-owned firm, or a public international organization . . .), the text should read: “30 months.” The Note should be deleted—applicants in this category must be able to show physical presence in the United States for 30 months.

On pages 20-21 (Table of Naturalization Requirements by Type of Applicant), for the Physical Presence requirements for the 5th applicant category (If you have been employed for 5 years or more by a U.S. nonprofit organization . . .), the text should read: “Not Required.” Applicants in this category are not required to establish a specified period of physical presence.

On page 26 (English and Civics), under the *Disability* section, the text should read: “If you have a physical or developmental disability or a mental impairment, you may be eligible for an exception to the English and civics requirements. To request an exception, you must file a ‘Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions’ (Form N-648) with your application. If you believe you qualify, contact a licensed medical doctor or licensed clinical psychologist who will need to complete and sign your N-648. To apply for a disability exception, your disability must be permanent (has lasted or is expected to last 1 year); and must not have been caused by illegal use of drugs.”

On pages 28-29: (Attachment to the Constitution; Serve the United States), under the *Selective Service* section, the text should read: “Male applicants generally need to register with the Selective Service before applying for naturalization. If you are male, and lived in the United States (in any status other than as a lawful nonimmigrant) at any time between your 18th and 26th birthdays, you must be registered with the Selective Service System. Males who first entered the United States after they turned 26 years old are exempt from the requirement to register.

Continued from page 1:

“If you were required to register, you will need to provide your Selective Service number to INS when you apply. You may get your Selective Service number by calling 1-847-688-6888 if you were born after December 31, 1959. If you were born before March 29, 1957, you should call 1-703-605-4047. If you have not registered, you must register at a United States post office or on the Internet to receive a Selective Service number. The Selective Service System Internet site can be reached at www.sss.gov or through the INS Internet site at www.ins.usdoj.gov. You must have a Social Security number to register on the Internet.

“If you were required to register but did not register before you turned 26, you must do the following:

- Call 1-847-688-6888 and complete the Selective Service System’s Questionnaire Form (Males born before March 29, 1957 should call 1-703-605-4047);
- Receive a ‘status information letter’ from the Selective Service; and
- Send the ‘status information letter’ to INS with your application.”

On page 34 (Documents you need to include with your N-400), the last paragraph should read:

“If you did not register with the Selective Service and you 1) are male 2) are 26 years old or older and 3) lived in the United States in a status other than as a lawful nonimmigrant between the ages of 18 and 26, send: ☐ A ‘Status Information Letter’ from the Selective Service (call 1-847-688-6888 for more information).”

On page 35, under section 4. (Send your application, documents, and fee to the appropriate Service Center . . .), the addresses for the California and Nebraska Service Centers should read:

“California Service Center
P.O. Box 10400
Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-0400

Nebraska Service Center
P.O. Box 87400
Lincoln, NE 68501-7400”

On page 47, in the Glossary, under the section on Selective Service, the text should read: “The Selective Service System is the Federal agency responsible for providing manpower to the U.S. Armed Forces in an emergency. Male applicants generally need to register with the Selective Service before applying for naturalization. See Chapter 4 (pp. 28-29) for information on who is required to register, how to register, and what to do if you were required to register but did not, or call the Selective Service at 1-847-688-6888 for more information.”